



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
DESCANSO GARDENS  
1418 DESCANSO DRIVE, BIRCH CLASSROOM  
LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE, CALIFORNIA 91011**  
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>

**Monday, October 15, 2012**

**10:00 AM**

**Present:** Chair Genevra Berger, Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner Dr. La-Doris McClaney, Commissioner Daphne Ng, Commissioner Sandra Rudnick, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell and Commissioner Dr. Harriette F. Williams

**Excused:** Commissioner Carol O. Biondi and Commissioner Steven M. Olivas Esq.

Call to Order. (12-4710)

**The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.**

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Introductions of October 15, 2012 Meeting attendees. (12-4698)

**Helen Berberian, Executive Assistant to Philip Browning, Director, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) introduced herself.**

2. Approval of the October 15, 2012 Meeting Agenda. (12-4699)

**On motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Commissioner Sunny Kang, unanimously carried, (Commissioner Biondi and Commissioner Olivas being absent), this item was approved. Commissioners McClaney and Williams were not present during vote taken for this item.**

3. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of October 1, 2012. (12-4700)

**On motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, unanimously carried, (Commissioner Biondi**

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and Commissioner Olivas being absent), this item was approved. Commissioners McClaney and Williams were not present during vote taken for this item.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

## **II. REPORT**

4. Chair's report for October 15, 2012 by Geneva Berger, Chair. (12-4701)

Chair Berger reported that Commissioner Patricia Curry was nominated as one of the "Top 50 Influential Women in Los Angeles", published annually in Los Angeles Magazine. Commissioner Carol O. Biondi was nominated last year.

The Commission congratulated Commissioner Curry.

## **III. DISCUSSIONS**

5. Discussion on the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Strategic Plan and the Commission's monitoring of objectives outlined in the plan. (12-4745)

Helen Berberian explained that the DCFS Strategic Plan (Plan) included input from various stakeholders including the Commission for Children and Families and Michael Nash, Presiding Juvenile Judge, Edelman Children's Court. The Plan is an outline of objectives that will drive action plans for each objective. Areas that are not listed in the Plan may be covered in the action plan. For the next phase of strategic planning, DCFS Director Browning, has requested that the DCFS Executive Team members sign up as leads for the objectives identified, with Managers as the co-leads, and that departmental staff partake in the implementation team. The proposed DCFS organizational chart is forthcoming.

The Commission expressed concerns, posed questions, and offered recommendations on the Plan as follows:

### **Concerns**

- Some of the objectives and deadlines of the Plan seem unrealistic.
- The objectives identified in the Plan do not clearly outline the area of family reunification, specifically regarding visitation.
- The mission statement seems inadequate.
- Self-Sufficiency was not prevalent in the Plan.

- The Plan appears to be solitarily DCFS and lacks integration of other County Departments.
- The Plan needs more focus on education.
- DCFS is not utilizing Community Partnerships to their full potential; there may be a lack of understanding on how to maintain the relationship and work with the Community.

#### Questions

- The Commission would like to provide input on the Plan; what role will the Commission have in the planning and implementation process?
- How will objectives of the Plan be prioritized?
- Where in the Plan will young population of ages zero to five years be included?

#### Recommendations

- Cases for young children should be grouped together with a Social Worker that is specialized in younger children and their developmental needs.

In response to questions and comments posed by the Commission, Ms. Berberian stated the following:

- Objectives with a December, 2012 deadline have been a work in progress for some time making the deadline achievable. For example, Objective I.2.6, the creation of 30-day assessment beds with currently contracted group home providers will be near completion at the target date of December 2012. Twelve beds will be available by the target date. The assessment beds are for newly detained youth who are not able to be easily placed. The assessments for the youth is not replicating Probation's assessment model.
- Ms. Berberian will inquire with Director Browning on whether Commissioners are able to participate on the Plan's Action Planning Teams.
- The action plans will address many of the areas of concerns that are not prevalent in the Strategic Plan.
- Amy Naami, Lead Counsel, Children Services Investigation Unit (CSIU)

is on a one-year assignment with DCFS as the Manager of Strategic Implementation. This assignment resulted from Ms. Naami's trend analysis conducted over a two-year period on child fatality cases issued to the Board of Supervisors. The analysis identified four core findings that were then cross referenced with the 50 objectives outlined the Plan. Two of the core findings tied with the objectives were: 1. ) increasing the efficiency at the front end; and 2.) increasing the efficacy of contracted services. Additionally, Ms. Naami will also be working on rewriting the DCFS Policy Manual and redesigning the training system for Social Workers. One of the action items in the Plan is to hire a consultant to rewrite the DCFS Policy Manual. Another area the Department is evaluating is the level of supervision provided for staff.

- The decrease in adoptions annually from the early 2000's is partly attributed to a decrease in the number of youth that are in Out-of-Home Care. The efforts with older youth are addressed in the Self-Sufficiency portion of the Plan's action planning.
- To address the increase in Social Worker case loads, Director Browning is looking to increase staff. The poverty level and availability of resources in the Service Planning Areas (SPA) are also being considered to determine the level of staffing needs among the DCFS offices. Additionally, cases are being evaluated by weighting the cases according to ten risks factors. Some cases are found to be at a higher risk and require more attention from the Social Worker. Additionally, the distribution of resources will be based on need and addressed in the feasibility report indicated in the Plan's Objective I.3.1.
- Developing a specialized unit that works with children zero to five years may be addressed in the Department's reorganization. In terms of developmental protocols, Dr. Charles Sophie has developed a video that will be used within the Department and provided to caregivers enabling them to see the impact of trauma on brain development. First 5 LA is exploring funding for in-home support services for the zero to five years of age population.
- Director Browning is exploring the feasibility of setting up a Quality Improvement Section and replicating the work done by the once existing Quality Assurance Section under the leadership of former DCFS Division Chief and current Chair of the Commission, Genevra Berger.
- Input from field staff is also being considered in the next phase of the Plan.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

The Commission recessed to lunch at 12:19 p.m.

The Commission reconvened at 12:55 p.m.

Attachments:    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

6. Discussion on the status and focus of the Commission's Committees and Workgroups and integration of each of the groups' focus with the DCFS Strategic Plan. (12-4748)

**Chair Berger stated that once the DCFS Action Plan Teams are developed, Commissioners may have the opportunity to participate in the development of the Action Plans. This collaboration will be a compliment to the Commission's current Workgroup/Committee efforts.**

**Commissioner Kang recommended that the Faith-Based Committee be changed to a Community Engagement Committee inclusive of all community outlets.**

**Vice Chair Kleinberg suggested that Director Browning present the DCFS Reorganization Plan at an upcoming Commission meeting.**

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

7. Discussion and approval of recommendations to the Executive Officer, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors regarding the duties and role of the Executive Liaison position. (12-4768)

**Chair Berger referred to the recommendation of duties document distributed to the Commissioners.**

**Vice Chair Friedman recommended that Ms. Drew Ivie keep the Commission informed of legislation relevant to the Commission's interests.**

**Chair Berger advised Commissioners to coordinate directly with Ms. Drew Ivie on meetings they would like her to attend. Timing conflicts should be brought to the Chair's attention.**

**Ms. Drew Ivie recommended that the Executive Committee be informed of her activities and meetings she is attending, in order to keep her efforts in line with the Commission's priorities.**

On recommendation and motion of Chair Genevra Berger, seconded by Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, unanimously carried, (Commissioner Biondi and Commissioner Olivas being absent), this item was approved with the addition of an item to the list of recommendations of duties and role of the Executive Liaison position as follows. Executive Liaison to keep the Commission informed of County, State and Federal legislation relevant to the Commission's objectives. Commissioner McClanney was not present during vote taken for this item.

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

8. Discussion on effective communication between Commission Workgroups/Committees with Commissioners and the role of the Executive Liaison. (12-4749)

**Agenda Item 8 was discussed under Agenda Item 7.**

9. Discussion of issues and topics for planning Commission activities and involvement for calendar year 2013. (12-4705)

**The following strategies were identified for planning activities for calendar year 2013:**

- **Collaboration with DCFS on areas of focus in order for Commissioners to have aligned direction with DCFS when advocating on committees and bodies that are not within the County structure.**
- **Meeting with DCFS through an Ad Hoc Committee on an annual basis to identify the focus of efforts for the upcoming years to facilitate the collaboration between the Commission and DCFS.**
- **Limiting presentations to a set amount of time to provide more time for Commission discussion.**
- **Reporting by Commissioners on meetings or conferences attended be more extensive and detailed.**
- **Coordinating agenda items suggested by Commissioners through the Commission Chair.**

**Designating the second meeting of the month for reports from standing Committees and/or Workgroups. Additionally, Commissioners who attend meetings or conferences should provide informative reports.**

**Chair Berger requested Ms. Drew Ivie create a template to track issues and conflicts identified by the Commission, and outcomes spearheaded through Commission efforts.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

- 10.** Discussion and approval of the Commission's 2013 meeting schedule. (12-4702)

**Chair Berger explained that the 2013 meeting schedule was based on the current year's schedule with the exception of the month of April having meetings on the second and fourth Monday of the month.**

**On motion of Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, seconded by Commissioner Sunny Kang, unanimously carried, (Commissioner Biondi and Commissioner Olivas being absent), the 2013 Commission's meeting schedule was approved. Commissioner McClaney was not present during vote taken for this item.**

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

#### **IV. MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **Matters Not Posted**

- 11.** Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (12-4706)

**There were none.**

##### **Announcements**

- 12.** Announcements for the meeting of October 15, 2012. (12-4708)

**Commissioner Franzen reported that she attended a conference on Safe Sleeping for Babies and distributed a brochure from the conference to the Commissioners titled "Safe Sleep Tips for Your Baby".**

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

**Public Comment**

13. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (12-4707)

**No members of the public addressed the Commission.**

**Adjournment**

14. Adjournment of the meeting of October 15, 2012. (12-4709)

**The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.**